

TOM RENICK COUNTY PARK – BIRD COUNTS FEBRUARY, 2017

As I am now into the second year of this project I can start to see differences from last year. In 2016 the herons and egrets were not moving north in February. Ducks were more plentiful in species as well as numbers in 2016. There were very low numbers of Sandwich Terns last year but they are moving north in good numbers this year (six counts of over 100). In 2016 there was only a trickle of American Robins but this year there were five counts of over 1,000.

During February I conducted 20 surveys involving 104 hours of counting birds. In all for the month I saw 91 species as against 2016 when I saw 81 species in February. The best day was the 25th when I saw 16,615 birds of 49 species. So far this year I have seen 103 species there were two additions this month Eared Grebe and Purple Sandpiper which brings the list up to 192 species. Such is the raw data now to the birds.

The Eared Grebe flew to the south on the 14th. The highest for the month count of Northern Gannets was that of 963 on the 15th. There were 30 American White Pelicans over the Halifax River on the 18th. Double-crested Cormorants have been moving to the north all month the highest daily count was that of 240 on the 12th. Another species that has been moving north all month if in very low numbers is the Great Blue Heron the highest count was that of 12 on the 15th. On the 28th a flock of nine Glossy Ibis flew to the north out at sea. Spring migration has clearly started. There were nine Roseate Spoonbills on the 14th with 14 on the 17th they all flew to the north. There was a new high count for Wood Storks there were 59 on the 14th - they flew to the south!

There were two Ring-necked Ducks on the 12th with two Redheads on the 22nd. For Surf Scoter there were three on the 10th, eight on the 19th and one on the 28th. There were very few ducks this month. There were single Northern Harriers flying to the north on the 10th, 12th and 18th. There were also single Merlin (24th) and Peregrine Falcon (18th) both flew to the north.

An American Oystercatcher flew north up the Halifax River on the 25th and a Whimbrel flew north offshore on the 28th (there was one on February 21, 2016). Sanderling peaked at 159 on the 11th a comparatively high count. On the 20th the Purple Sandpiper flew to the north it was trailing a flock of Ruddy Turnstones (52 turnstones flew to the north on that date).

There were 11 Pomarine Jaegers this month with six on the 15th. Parasitic Jaegers did better there were 35 for the month with 13 on the 4th. There was a

Glaucous Gull on the 3rd. The shrimp boats have been absent this month which reduces counts of a range of seabirds. Terns have been moving strongly to the north with new high counts for Royal Tern of 879 on the 10th and for the Sandwich Tern of 479 on the 25th.

There was a Pileated Woodpecker on the 11th a rarity here. There was a Loggerhead Shrike on the 1st. Next we come to a series of new high counts for the park. There were 96 Fish Crows on the 12th, 10,950 Tree Swallows on the 25th, 3,920 American Robins on the 8th, 114 Common Grackles on the 8th and 675 Brown-headed Cowbirds on the 25th all were flying to the north. Finally the wintering adult male Baltimore Oriole was last seen on the 26th.

Harry Robinson